



**MARCH 5, 2019 COMMENTS TO CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE FROM SOLARCONNECTICUT (SOLARCONN) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MIKE TRAHAN**

OPPOSE H.B. No. 7251 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING LONG-TERM CONTRACTS FOR CERTAIN CLASS I GENERATION PROJECTS AND THE RESIDENTIAL SOLAR INVESTMENT PROGRAM AND REQUIRING A STUDY OF THE VALUE OF SOLAR.

What's the rush? It's the question the solar industry and it's 2,200 Connecticut workers has been asking for more than a year now after 2018's SB 9 was first introduced.

SB9, specifically Section 7, offered by the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, represents a fundamental change in how solar works. A change that has been attempted in but a few states. And has not worked in any of them. For DEEP to force on the very successful solar industry policies that do not work is incredible. In no way should we experiment with an industry that employs 2,200 workers and offers every electric ratepayer access to America's best solar workforce.

Mr. Chairman, a couple years ago a whisper campaign started in this building. It alleged that when home and business owners use their own resources to purchase a solar system and begin making their own electric power that somehow this very small percentage of ratepayers is causing an economic calamity on the 95% of ratepayers that do not have solar on their roof. The so-called "cost-shift" myth is what prompted the creation of SB9. And the rush to do so (far quicker than any other state has transitioned from one program to another) has caused great concern from solar business owners and the 2,000 plus Connecticut workers. We find ourselves here today, trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist.

Still today we hear from lawmakers who have buyers' remorse on SB 9. The bill never did have solid support last year. It took a while, but the industry and our allies in the citizen action and environmental communities convinced a majority of lawmakers in the state House on the last night before the last day of the 2018 session that two critical pieces to SB 9 had to be changed. Retiring net metering, and continuing to defund commercial solar investment. Thanks to an educated and sometimes uncomfortable line of questioning on the House floor by a member of this committee, and courageous amendments filed and defended on the House floor by another member of this committee these two issues were overturned on a voice vote.

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For a brief moment, sanity ruled the day. Because this bill was taken up at 2am the night before the last day of the session with no time left for the Senate to reconsider an amended SB9, those amendments were withdrawn. But it gives you a sense for the weak understanding/support for this bill.

Here are the changes (previously submitted to ET Committee) that SolarConn wishes the Committee to make before the bill is voted out of Committee:

Commercial Sector:

1. Continue the ZREC program for two (not one) years.
2. Grow Clean Energy Jobs By Increasing Investment Beyond 2012 Level
3. Lift Cap on Virtual Net Metering
4. Lift Cap on Community (Shared) Solar
5. Lift Cap System Size (currently limited to load on single meter)
6. Pause on 2018's SB9 Net Metering Changes Until Data on Value of Solar is Collected

Residential Sector:

1. Give Consumers the "Right to Self-Generate" Store and Use The Power They Make on Site
2. Add 100MW to RSIP (existing) Program (already in 7251)
3. Conduct a Study on the Value of Solar And Use Data to Guide Future Solar Programs
4. Pause on 2018's SB9 Net Metering Changes Until Data on Value of Solar is Collected

END